



St. Mary's College (Autonomous)
Reaccredited with 'A+' Grade by NAAC (Cycle IV)
Thoothukudi



Criterion: VII –Institutional Values and Best Practices
Metric: 7.2.1– Best Practice 1
Revitalising the Rural Economy
Year: 2018-2023



7.2.1. The Best Practices of the Institution

The institution has two distinct best practices that cater to the student well-being both on and off the campus. They strengthen the morale and integrity of the young women to face the challenges of life with utmost confidence, integrity and love for society.

Best Practice I

Title of the Practice: “Revitalising the Rural Economy”- Community Development Programme (CDP)

St. Mary's College is dedicated to educating young individuals with a focus on fostering their contribution to societal advancement. Central to its mission is instilling the intrinsic value of every individual, thereby guiding students towards a purposeful existence. The curriculum extension platform embodies educational principles, encapsulated by the motto “Serve While You Learn.” This educational approach underscores the importance of community service emphasised through the curriculum. Through extension activities, students engage in service, reflection, and learning, thereby nurturing a holistic educational experience.

St. Mary's college orients its mission in educating youngsters to contribute to social progress especially the progress of the nation's rural population. The holistic educational module of the institution emphasises the need for the students to volunteer for social service in the rural neighbourhood.

Objectives

- To build a mutual link between the students and the rural society.
- To generate the spirit of conscious collective living.
- To foster empathy and concern for others
- To aim at the betterment of rural economy through conscious efforts to uplift the lives of the rural women.

The Context

As envisaged in the Unnat Bharat Abhiyan Scheme, the institution strives to bring in transformational change in rural development processes by helping the nation build the architecture of an inclusive India. Although 80% of the younger generation unequivocally come from underprivileged backgrounds, they are immersed in a competitive world and strive vigorously to succeed in life. There is a notable lack of awareness, or perhaps an indifferent attitude, towards social realities, leading to a significant disparity between the privileged and the disadvantaged. The HEI plays a crucial role in awakening them to the harsh realities of life, fostering empathy and concern for others, which can promote sustainable living. St. Mary's has integrated outreach programmes with a focus on societal welfare into the learning process, offering benefits to both the students and the community.

The Practice:

The institution is dedicated to enhancing the social and economic standing of rural regions, aiming to uplift their communities through empowering the rural women. Its Community Development Programme encompasses the values, concepts, practices, and challenges faced by various communities, enabling students to explore solutions within these groups. The institution is one of the best performing institutions under UBA Scheme.

This initiative moulds the students into community volunteers, providing insights into both the obstacles and the advantages associated with the inclusion of the marginalised in the community development efforts. It extends to the adopted villages of Korampallam, Maravanmadam, Palayakayal, Servaikaranmadam and Tharuvaikulam. Various development schemes such as Terrace gardening, Water conservation, Rainwater harvesting, Tree plantations, Soft skills Training, and Rural Entrepreneurship Development schemes such as tailoring, fashion designing, Preparation of Home Products were implemented and created an awareness of these practices in the day- to- day life in the adopted villages. Rotary Club and Morning star NGO also supported the programme. The students actively participated in all the social activities. The college offers different training programmes and hands on training for the rural women to meet their basic financial, economic, and social needs. It sponsored eco-friendly programmes on water harvesting, roof garden, pond cleaning and making cloth bags. 2656 women have received entrepreneurial training certificates from the institution.

- Distribution of sanitizers, mask, rice, and grocery items during the pandemic.
- Sponsored Nila Vembu Kasayam, the herbal drink that prevents infections, to the people from the adopted villages

- Distribution of Covid 19 relief fund to 75 families (Rs. 1000)
- Distribution of face mask, rice, wheat, vegetables, and grocery items to gipsies, weavers and underprivileged women.
- Distribution of nutritional health mix to the children
- Conduct of Covid Vaccination Survey, Election Awareness Campaign
- Celebration of Independence Day through awareness on “Hoisting National Flag at Home” and distribution of national flags in the adopted villages.
- Conduct of Awareness Programmes on “Mental Health,” “Hazards of Plastic Usage” and “Government Schemes for Women and Girl Children,” “Child Abuse and Child Rights,” “The Need for Higher Education,” “Women Pregnancy and Childbirth Defects,” and the conduct of “Quiz” to the school children.
- Conduct of “Free Mega Medical Camp,” “Cleaning of Seashore”
- Entrepreneurship Development & Hands on Training programmes on the “Preparation of Organic Growth Promoters for Plants from Kitchen Wastes,” “Natural Fertilizer-Vermicomposting,” “Mushroom Cultivation,” “Origami Craft: Art from Paper,” “Training in home-based small-scale industries such as Basket-weaving and Agarbathi-making.”
- Orientation sessions for the women on “Women’s Health and Menstrual Hygiene”
- Installation of Solar Lamps in the adopted villages.
- Orientation sessions for the kids on “Digital Literacy,” “Digital Elucidation of Bio-Living Creatures,” “Digital Presentation of Dissection in Invertebrates and Chordates” and “Efficient Learning of Linguistic Skills and Mathematical Fundamentals,” “Imparting Skills in Mathematics” and conduct of Evening Tuitions.

Funds/Awards received for CDP

- A project entitled “Prospecting of Fishery Resources into Value Added Products” was sanctioned by UBA for Rs. 1,00,000.
- The UBA Coordinator received Rs. 75,000 from Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of National Development.
- The principal received Rs.50,000 from UBA for Assistance for Awareness, Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) Study.
- The institution received Rs. 1,75,000 as perennial fund from UBA.

- The institution is one among the 5 institutions at the national level to receive the award from UBA for poster competition.





Evidence of Success

The Community Development Programme has led the transformation of the college community as well as the adopted villages in and around the coastal region. Involvement of the faculty and the students in the service of the rural and the semi-urban poor has enabled to create a positive impact in the quality of life and living, empowering the self and the society. Academics with such linkage to the society had been certainly a fruitful exercise. Students realize their responsibility towards the social progress of the society. It has forged them into pragmatic social workers. As the extension activities are done on weekends, approach to

inmates of the neighbourhood is possible. Appreciation of service by the people and NGOs of the activities of the college has added credibility to the CDP. It has emerged as a participatory, holistic, and inclusive practice that leads to a positive and concrete development both to the students and the rural society. Through empowering the rural women, the institution has played a tremendous role in revitalising the rural economy.

Problems Encountered and Resources Required

Problems encountered are overcome through the extended activities of social concern. However, the common constraints of time and distance are crucial. In the midst of Covid 19 students' participation is restricted. Sometimes continual follow up measures could not be undertaken immediately due to the restriction routine of the pandemic. Modalities of transport was one of the hurdles to the optimum utilization of the programme. Financial allotment through Government Schemes and voluntary contribution of the management helped in promoting the welfare of the poor and needy in the society. It also instils social responsibility in every student to serve for the betterment of the society and the nation.





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